

Hi, My name is Jon Ryan and I've been a professional musician based out of Boston, MA, for 6 years now.

My band, Ball in the House, performs nationally and has released 4 albums independently. We've been lucky enough to get extra work doing the radio and tv music for Kraft's Cool Whip commercials for the last 3 years.

We've only had minimal success getting airplay for our own music. We've performed live to promote shows on many radio stations, but getting regular airplay of our cd's is much more important to reaching a larger audience for the band. Many of the bigger stations haven't been able to play our music because we're independent - they'll only play stuff from major labels. The only place where we've had any luck has been small local stations, though oftentimes, they can only do so much without a major label push.

As an independent band, we actually make a living doing this - not rich by any stretch, but we can at least get by. Local programming is very important for us to even have a chance of breaking into a larger market and reach more people. Even though we tour nationally, the majority of our fans and gigs are based around Boston, and having access to the smaller local stations, even in a small way, helps us promote our music in a better way than we ever could without.

If the FCC is defining "local programming," it should consider having most decisions made at the local station level.

Many types of programming can and should count as local programming - music of local artists, of course, but also local news, affairs, and events.

Participation in local events can help, but I feel it's more important that actual airtime be devoted to local programming. Hosting a charity event is definitely cool - but it doesn't help local artists like myself take advantage of local radio.

Concerning "payola," this is something that we all in the music community know happens frequently. My own band used an indie promotor 3 years ago to get radio play. We got listed on a chart, but when we actually rolled up our sleeves and called the radio stations that were supposedly spinning our record, all except for one had never heard of us. We're a pop/r&b band, and two of the stations actually turned out to be a country station and a talk radio station. That experience obviously didn't quite turn out how we expected. I don't have a solution to how to most fairly regulate programming, but I at least wanted to relay my experience.

I thank you for reading this note and taking into some account the opinion of an independent local musician.

Sincerely,
Jon J Ryan
Ball in the House
<http://www.ballinthehouse.com>

